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HOUSE MOVES FORWARD ON PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

~Four bills pass with overwhelming Republican support~

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Several pieces of legislation aimed at providing additional property tax relief for Floridians passed the House Military & Local Affairs Policy Committee today. These bills will provide additional homestead exemptions for first-time property owners, cap all property taxes at 1.35% of total assessed valued, make it easier for property owners to challenge their assessments and limit assessment increases to 5 percent for non-homestead property.

“During these challenging and uncertain economic times, government must focus on recharging the state’s economy and promoting economic growth,” said **House Majority Leader Adam Hasner** (R-Delray Beach). “Government can accomplish this by lowering the tax burden on Floridians. These measures will make Florida more affordable and help stimulate economic activity in Florida’s real estate market.”

The following legislation was approved today by the House Military & Local Affairs Policy Committee:

HJR 97 - Additional Homestead Exemption for First-Time Homestead Property Owners

HJR 97, sponsored by **Representative Carl Domino** (R- Juno Beach), proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to provide a new, additional homestead exemption to first-time homeowners in an amount equal to 50 percent of the homestead property’s just value on January 1 of the year the homestead is established. The amount of the exemption not to exceed \$250,000, and will be reduced each year by 20 percent of the initial, additional exemption or by the amount the homestead’s assessed value is lower than just value because of the Save Our Homes benefit.

“At a time when there is an abundance of affordable housing on the market, one of the best things we can do is incentivize first time homebuyers to purchase existing homes. That’s one way to stabilize Florida’s real estate market,” said **Representative Domino**. “Reducing the tax burden on property owners can help get Florida’s economy going again.”

(more)

HJR 385 - Limitation on Aggregate Ad Valorem Taxes on Real Property

HJR 385, sponsored by **Representative David Rivera** (R-Miami), proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to limit the combined amount of ad valorem taxes collected by counties, school districts, municipalities, and special districts on any parcel of real property. If approved by the voters, no taxing authority would be able to tax more than 1.35% of the property's highest taxable value.

"Over the past few years government has been the winner and taxpayers have been the losers," said **Representative Rivera**. "This bill simply brings tax relief to Floridians and protects them from future tax increases and gouging."

HB 521 - Just Valuation of Property

HB 521, by **Representative Carlos Lopez-Cantera** (R-Miami) will make it easier for property owners to challenge their assessments, and reform the current system of property appraisals which places the presumption of correctness on the property appraiser and the burden of proof on the property owner.

"This legislation restores fairness to the appraisal process and levels the playing field for taxpayers," said **Representative Lopez-Cantera**. "This money is not government's to begin with and we shouldn't have a system in place that makes people fight for what is rightfully theirs."

PCB MLA 09-02 - Property Assessment Limitation

This proposed committee bill proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to reduce the limitation on assessment increases to certain non-homestead real property from 10 percent to 5 percent.

"The 10% change approved by voters in January 2008 created more predictability and insulated non-homestead property owners from large increases in property taxes due to increased assessments," said **Representative Dorothy L. Hukill** (R-Port Orange), chairman of the House Military & Local Affairs Committee. "In these challenging economic times, we need to do everything we can to help current property owners and encourage more investment in Florida's real estate market."

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